1917

# DEANS

## Pick Method for the Banjo

C NOTATION

BY

WARREN N. DEAN

The only method for playing the 5 strings of the Banjo with a pick

Introducing some effects and information not heretofore published

*Price 75 cents net*

STEPHEN SHEPARD—*Publisher*—PATERSON, N. J.

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# To the Teacher and Student

To my knowledge this is the only method that recommends the use of the 5th or short string of the banjo for pick playing. The uses are many, some of which are; First: In playing chords which the 5th string forms part of and cannot be executed any other way; Second: In playing chords from 2d violin or piano parts, especially in an orchestra, it gives more variation to the chord, making it easier to play which will be shown in this book; Third: A player can change to the finger style without disadvantage; Fourth: It gives perfect equilibrium to the head of the banjo which insures the best tone. I am informed that the celebrated artist Mr. Alfred A. Farland uses the fifth string in all his playing. It is just as easy to play with it as without, in fact I think easier.

## The Care of the Banjo

The head on a banjo should be kept tight to give the best results. If you have tried to tighten the head and it bursted do not give up. The cause may be a poor or cheap head or a worn out one. In damp weather the head expands and if you tighten it during a damp spell you should loosen it when dry weather arrives to keep it normal.

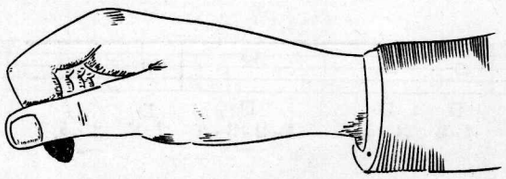
Wire strings rust very soon particularly if the hands perspire. For perspiring hands you will find a little pure grain alcohol, rubbed on the hands will remedy this. The hands should be washed clean before applying the alcohol.

Strings should never be left on a banjo until they break or rot off but should be changed for new ones at least every two or three months. It depends on how much the banjo is used. Professional players use new strings every time they play.

One old or a false string will spoil the tone of all the rest even if the rest are new.

Always keep your banjo in a case or cover when not in use. If your hands are not clean when you play, the strings and head will soon become soiled.

After receiving a lot of ideas from other players and experimenting myself, I worked out the following simple process for cleaning the head of the banjo while it is on the instrument. This does the work perfectly and if the head is not soiled too bad will make it like a new one. First loosen up the brackets about ½ turn all around. Then take a soft rag moistened with a little water (not soaked) and rub a little soap (any kind of cleaning soap) on the rag. Rub lightly over the soiled parts. After the dirt is loosened take another part of the rag, which is moistened and wipe away the dirt. As this does not make the head wet but just a little damp, it will dry out in a few hours so it is ready to use, but do not tighten the brackets until thoroughly dried out.



(The way the pick is held)

For practicing, a flexible pick is the best (one that will bend a little when pressed against the strings). For playing with an orchestra the heaviest pick is the best. This pick should not give when pressed against the strings. Your teacher or dealer can supply you with any style of picks.

## Regarding Strings

As there are so many different opinions, as to just what kind of strings is best for pick playing, I will let this at the option of the teacher. I find the best results in using a wire 1st and 5th, a silk 2nd and 3rd and a compound 4th. A compound guitar G makes a very good 4th particularly for orchestra playing.

## Tuning the Banjo

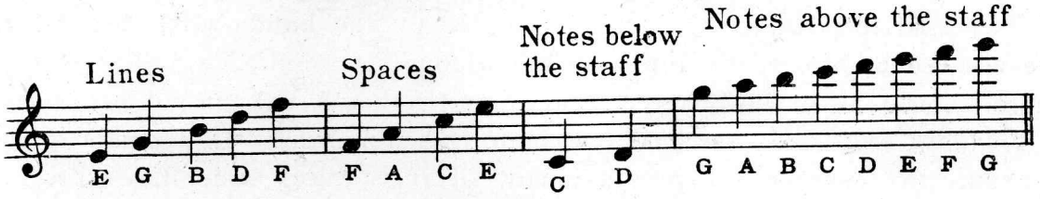
Tune the 4th string to C below middle C on the piano or any other instrument which is in tune, stop the 4th string at the 7th fret and tune the 3rd string in unison, stop the 3rd string at the 4th fret and tune the 2nd string in unison, stop the 2nd string at the 3rd fret and tune the 1st string in unison, stop the 1st string at the 5th fret and tune the 5th string in unison.

## Placing the Bridge

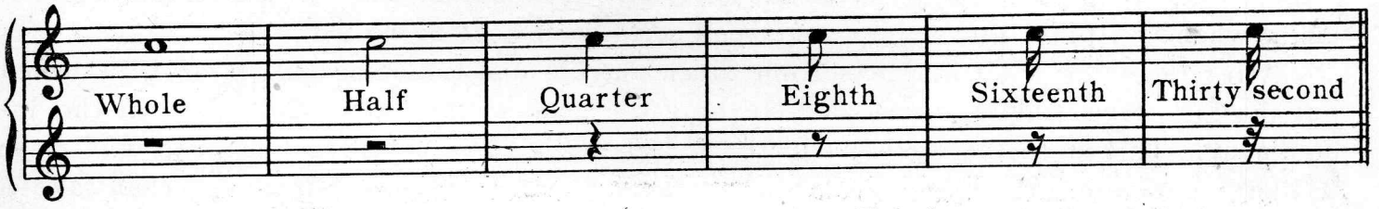
The bridge should be placed the same distance from the 12th fret as the nut is. The harmonic (which is made at the 12th fret by touching the string and picking it at the same time) is the best way of testing the banjo to know whether or not it is true. If the stopped note at the 12th fret sounds higher than the harmonic the bridge is up too far and should be placed a little farther back (toward the tail-piece). If the stopped note is lower than the harmonic the bridge should be set further up (towards the nut).

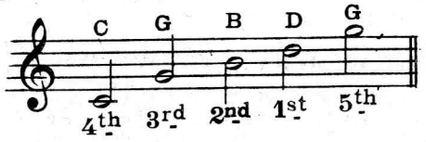
In this work the 5th string will be marked O - open, D - down stroke, U - up stroke.

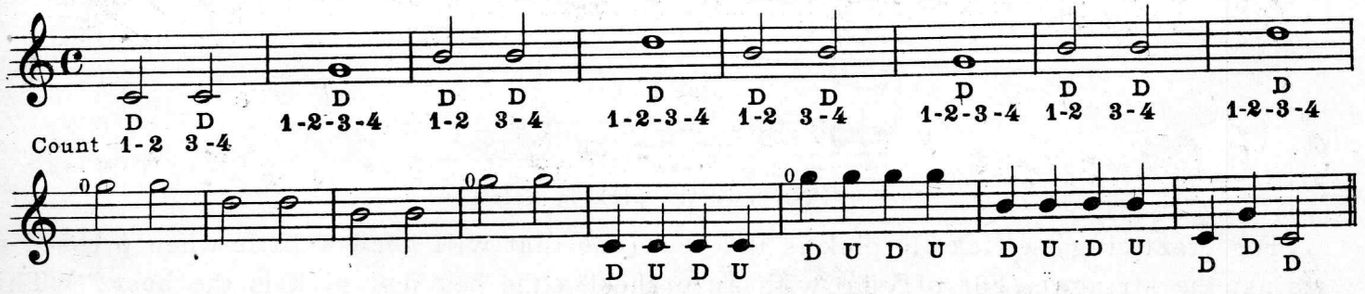
## Exercise in Note Reading




## Notes and Their Equivalent Rests



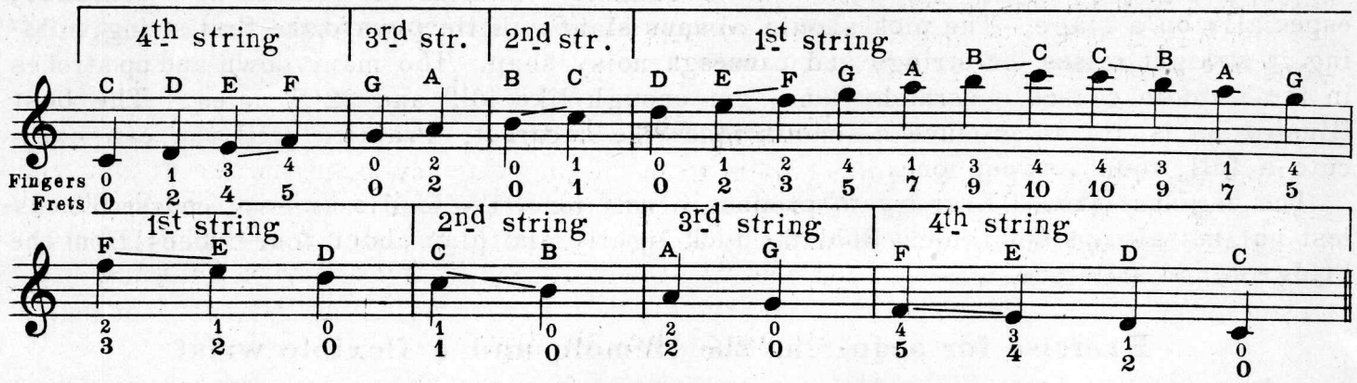

## Open Strings on the Banjo

## Exercise on the Open Strings




In counting time, never count to your playing, but first learn to count even, then play to your counting.

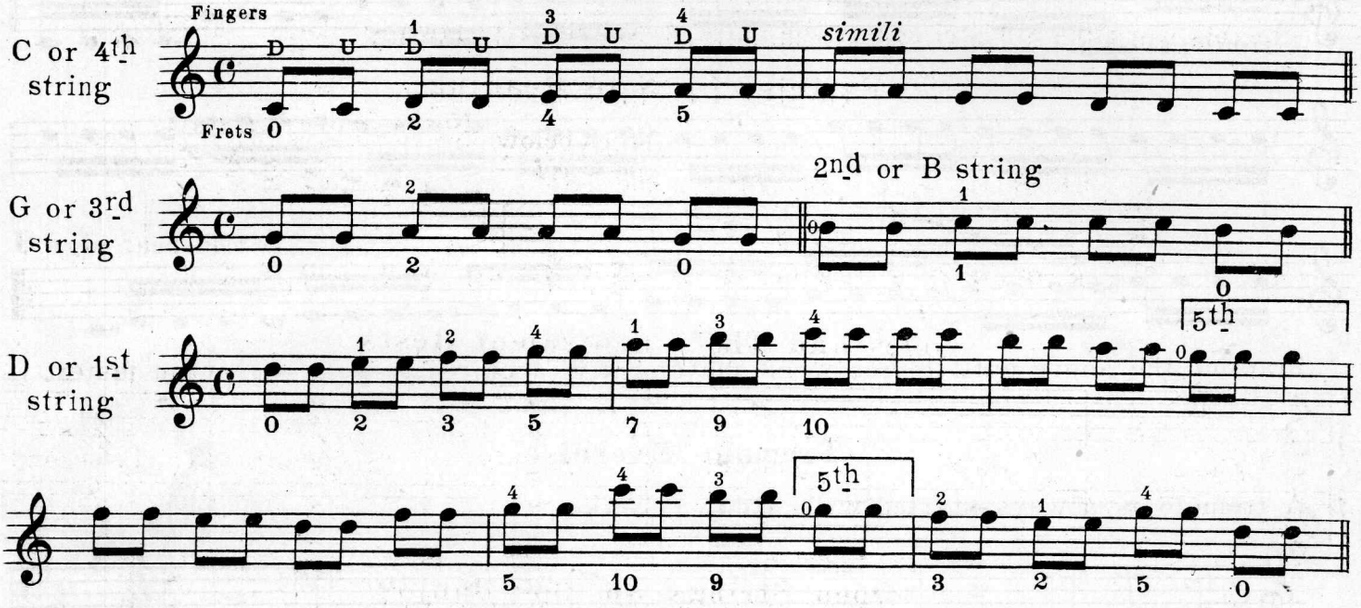
## Scale of C Major

Practice the following scale first with down strokes, then down and up to each note, then 4 strokes to each note.

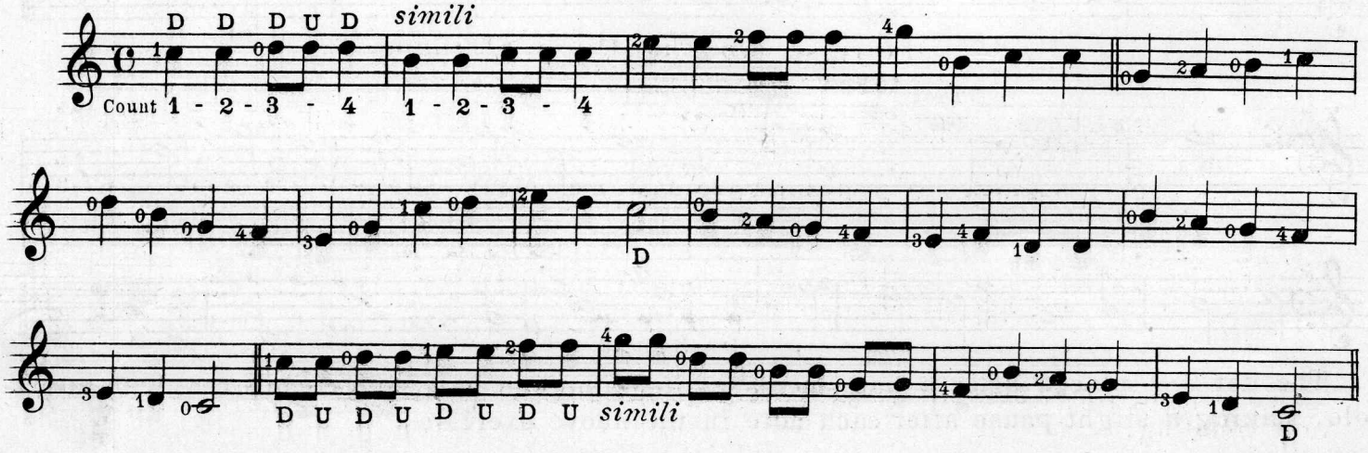

4th string
3rd str.
2nd str.
1st string
C D E F G A B C D E F G A B C C B A G
Fingers 0 1 3 4 0 2 0 1 0 1 2 4 1 3 4 4 3 1 4
Frets 0 2 4 5 0 2 0 1 0 2 3 5 7 9 10 10 9 7 5
1st string
2nd string
3rd string
4th string
F E D C B A G F E D C
2 1 0 1 0 2 0 4 3 1 0
3 2 0 1 0 2 0 5 4 2 0

A Major scale is a scale having its half steps between the 3rd and 4th and 7th and 8th intervals respectively. An interval is the distance between two tones. A half step is from one fret to the next to it. This can be very easily demonstrated on one string.

## Exercise on the Different Strings

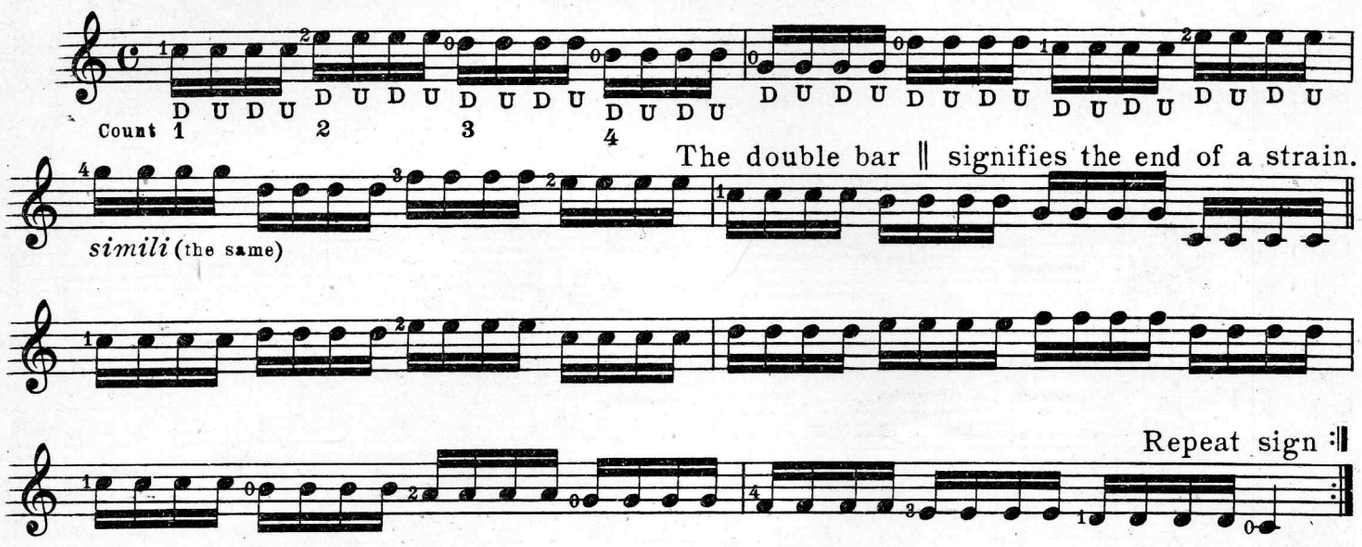



## Exercise to learn to locate the Notes

Play the following exercise slow at first, then increase the speed each time.

## The Tremolo

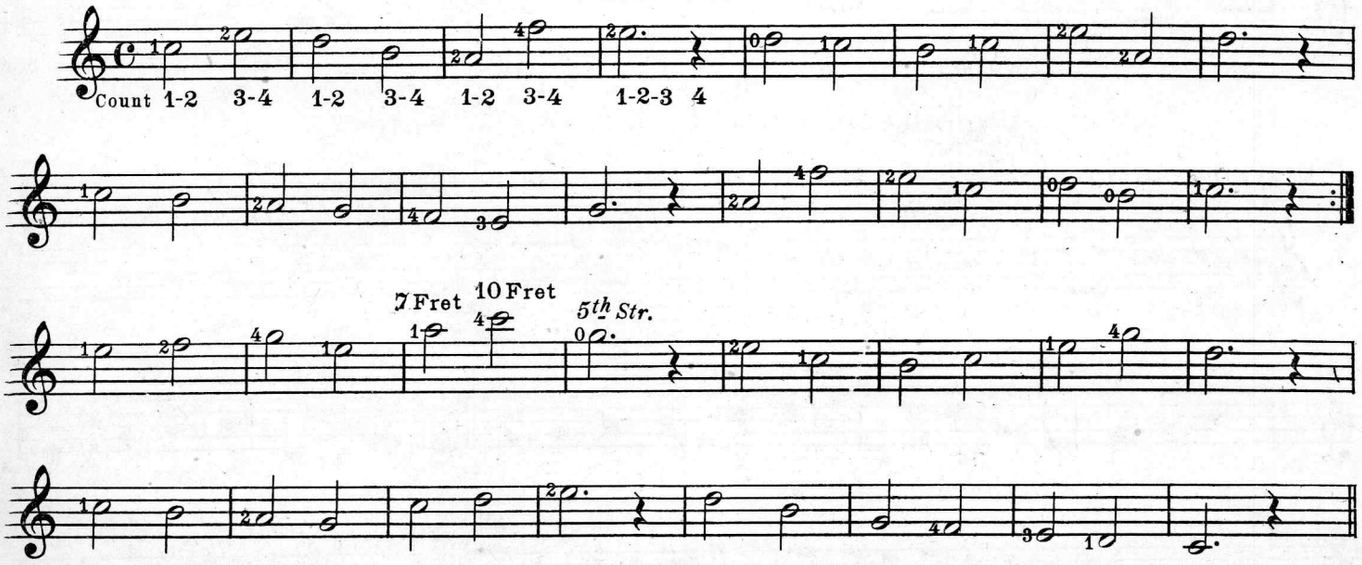
The tremolo is used to sustain a note or notes when one stroke is not sufficient.When the tremolo is properly executed you cannot hear any break in the strokes at a distance, especially on a stage. The pick should always slant a little toward the first string, holding it straight raises the strings and causes a noisy snap. Too many down and up strokes in the tremolo causes a scratchy tone, not enough like 16th and 32nd notes. The best illustration is, try to produce a smooth tone like a cornet. Practice until you can exe - cute a full, round, sweet tone.

The beginner should first try to produce a soft tone, the loud tone is of course the easiest but not always desirable. Hold the pick lightly and play about four inches from the bridge for a soft tone.

### Exercise for acquiring the tremolo and a flexible wrist

Practice the above until a free wrist movement is acquired, repeat each time faster.

### Tremolo Exercise

A tremolo is always started with a down stroke.




The dot ( · ) placed after a note increases its value one half, start each note with a tremolo, making a slight pause after each note in the above exercise.

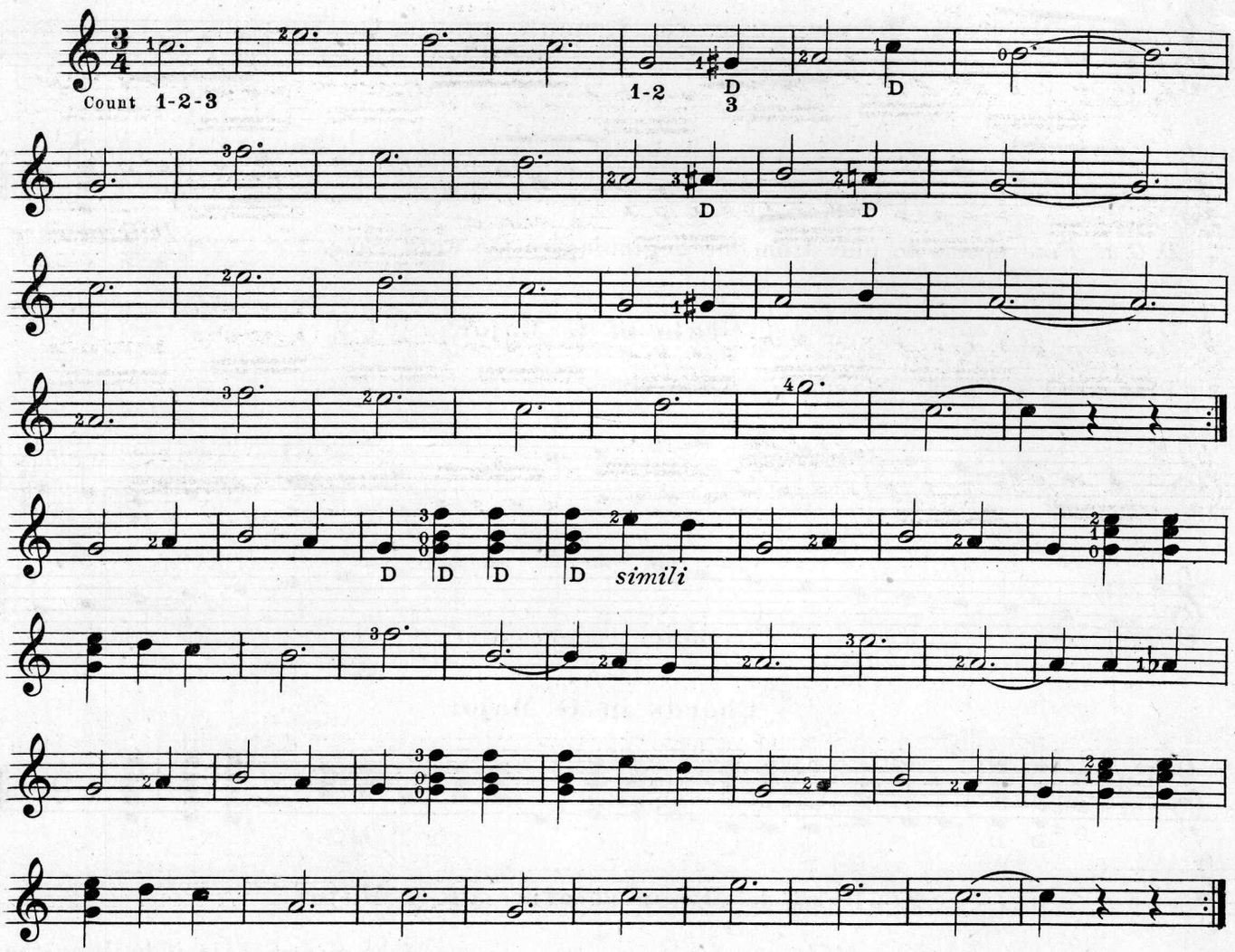
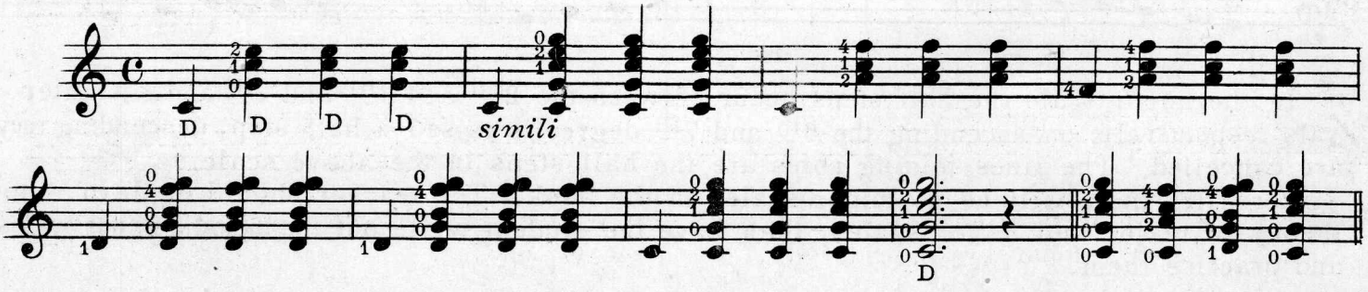
## The Tie

The tie ( ♩‿♩ ) is effected by a continuous tremolo without any break. A sharp (♯), flat (♭) or natural (♮) placed in front of a note is called an accidental. A sharp raises a note one half step, a flat lowers it one half step, a natural restores it to its original tone.

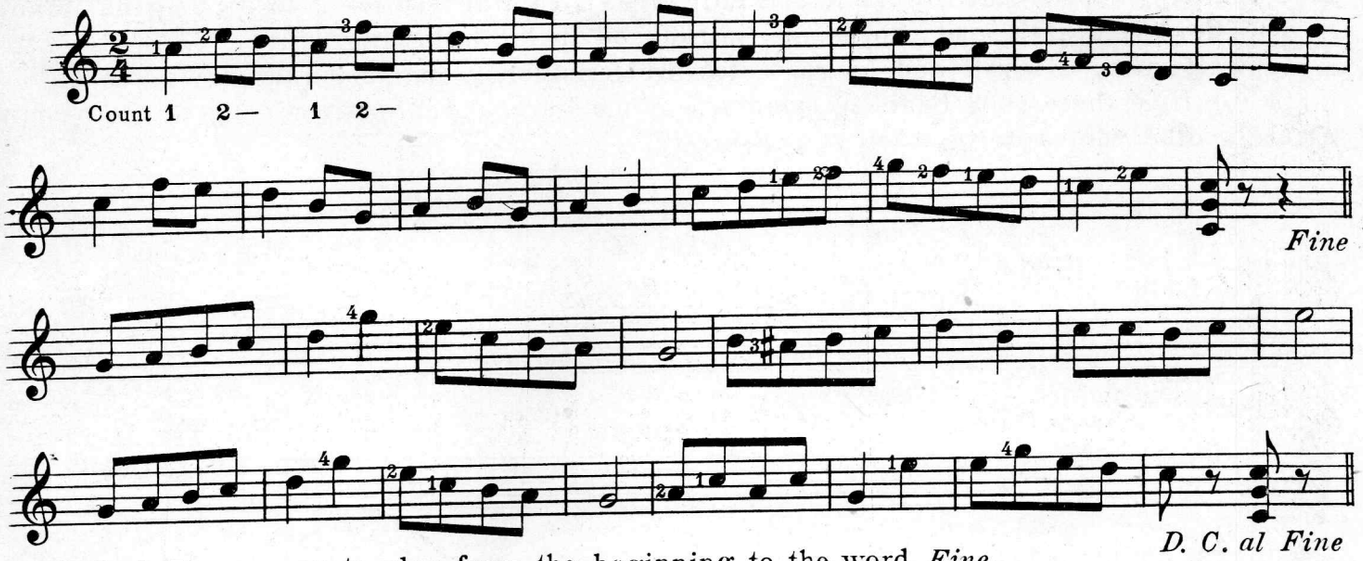
The tie, accidentals and chords are introduced in the following waltz.

In waltz time all half and longer notes are tremoloed, quarter notes down stroke.

In $^{3}/_{4}$ time there is 3 beats or counts to a measure and 3 quarter notes or their equivalent in other notes or rests to a measure.

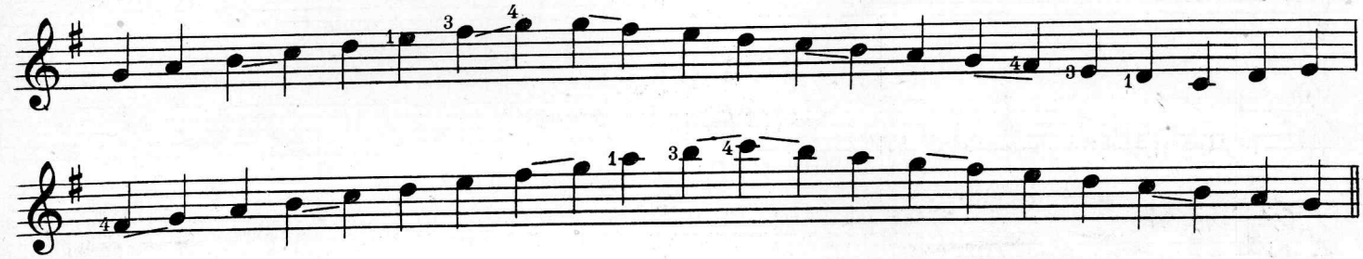
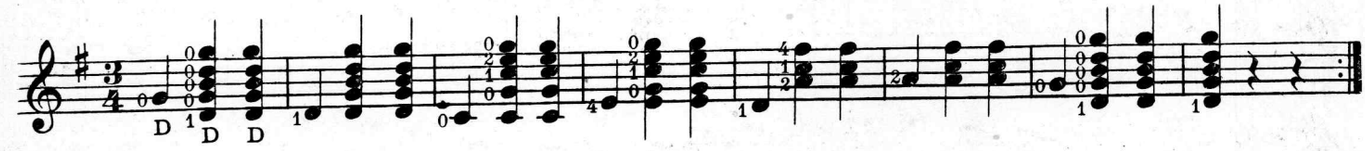
## Waltz

## Chord Study in C Major

# March

In $^{2}/_{4}$ time, quarter notes are tremoloed, 8th notes down stroke, 16th notes down and up stroke.

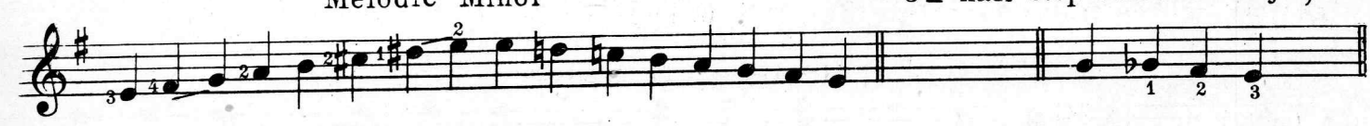



*D. C. al Fine* means to play from the beginning to the word *Fine*.

## Scale of G Major

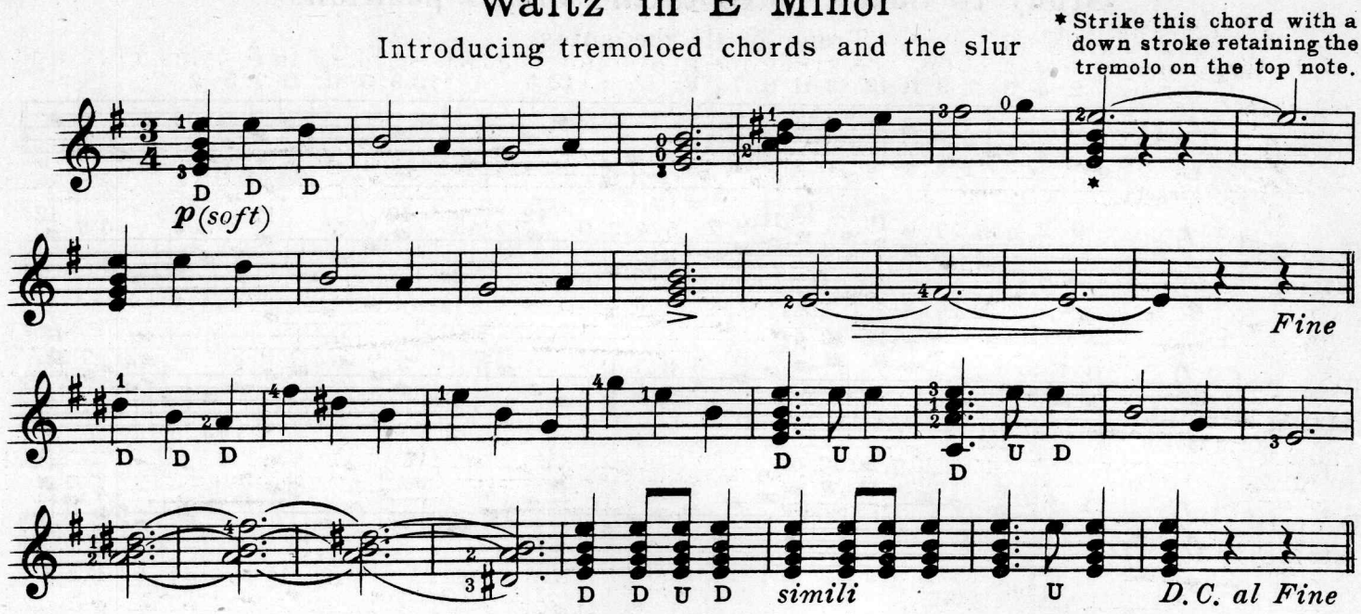
Play all F's sharp. Tremolo all the notes.

## Chords in G Major

## Scale of E Minor relative of G Major

The minor scale is built on the 3rd half step below the major, thus:

Melodic Minor

In the minor scale the half steps occur between the 2nd and 3rd and 7th and 8th intervals respectively, on ascending the 6th and 7th degree is raised a half step, descending they are cancelled. The lines joining notes are the half steps in the above scale.

Hereafter there will be no minor scales in the book. The teacher should explain the theory of major and minor scales, then have the student write out the melodic minor scales and practice them.

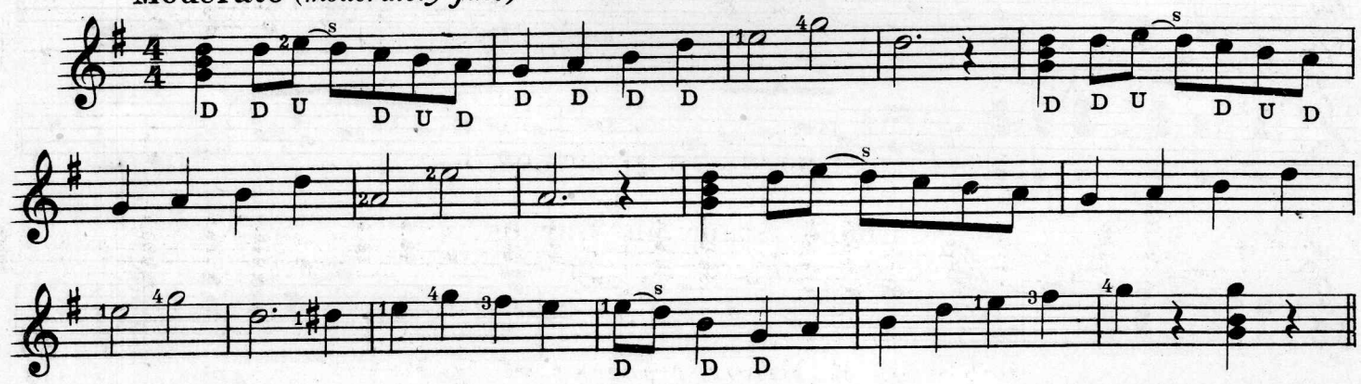
# Waltz in E Minor

Introducing tremoloed chords and the slur

The slur ⌒ is a line connecting two or more notes of a different degree on the staff and is played in a smooth connected manner.

When changing from one string to another the new string should be played with a down stroke. The snap helps to break up a succession of too many down strokes when crossing strings. The snap is made by pulling the string with a finger of the left hand. In this method the snap will be indicated by the slur and letter S combined. (⌒ˢ) The snap in the exercise below is made by pulling the D string with the 2nd finger of the left hand.

# March

Introducing the Snap

**Moderato** *(moderately fast)*

Tremolo half and longer notes in 4/4 time. Practice the snap until the tone is equal to that made with the pick. A rapid pick execution can be obtained by playing about one and one half inches from the bridge, as there is more resistance in the strings at this point.

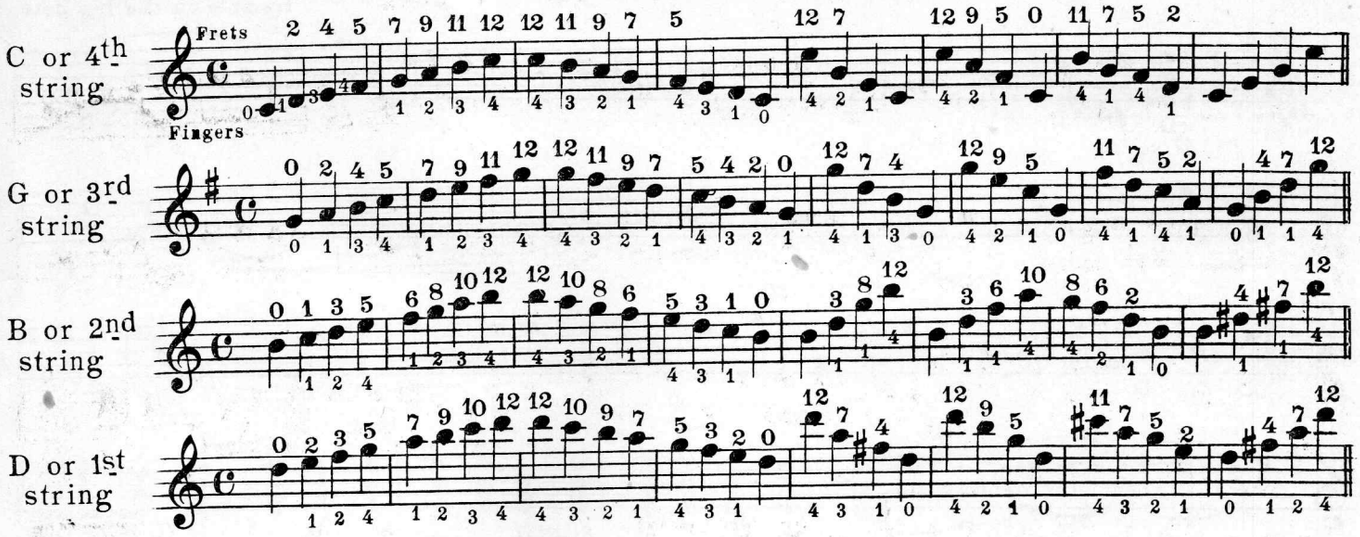
## Scale of F Major

Play all B's flat.

*3B* means the 3rd barre or fret and is made by placing the 1st finger across the 3 strings. The letter *B* means barre and *P* means position which will be taken up on the following pages.

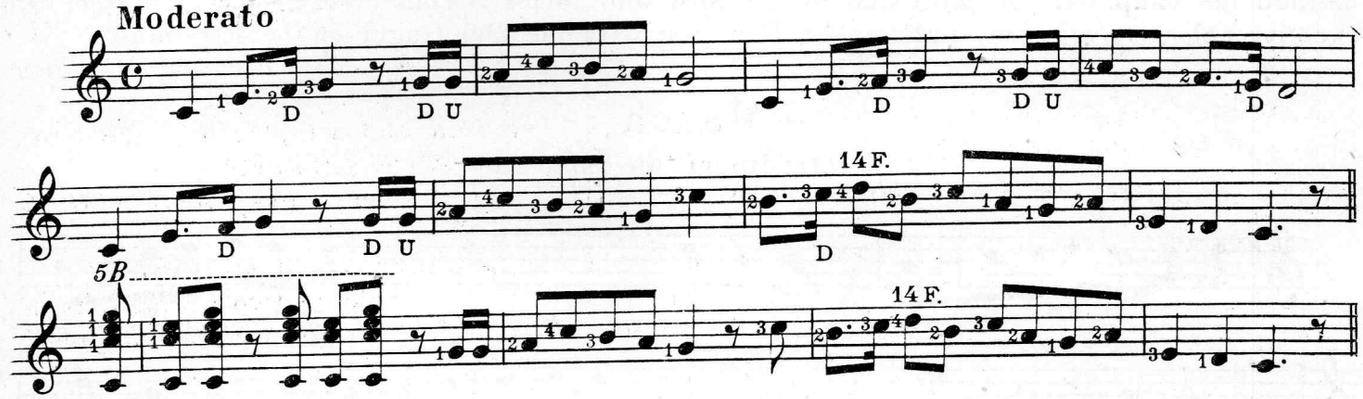
## Study to locate notes in the higher positions

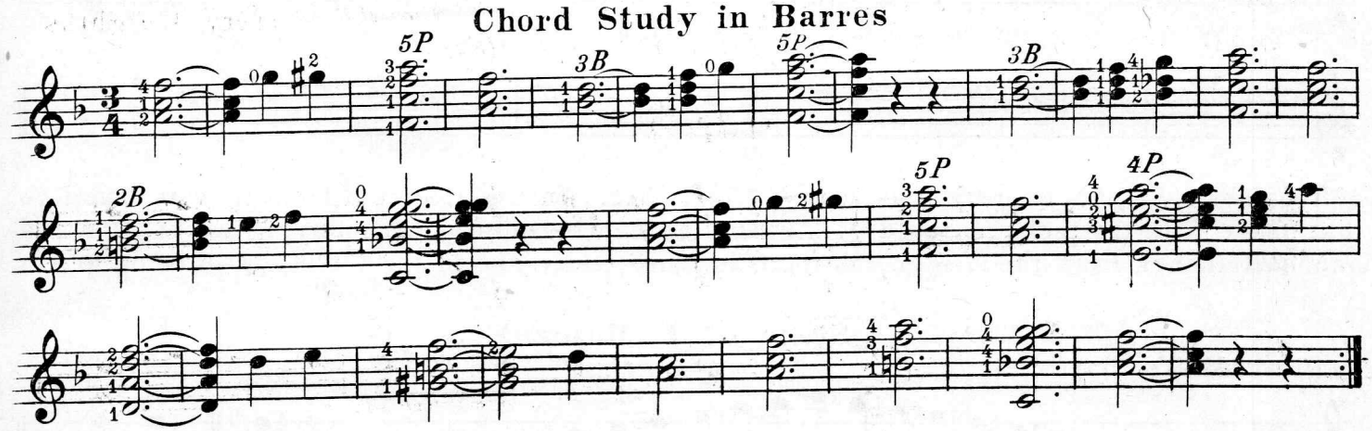
Tremolo all the notes




The 5th string is always played open when playing with the pick.
Practice the above until all the notes up to the 12th fret are memorized.

## Old Black Joe

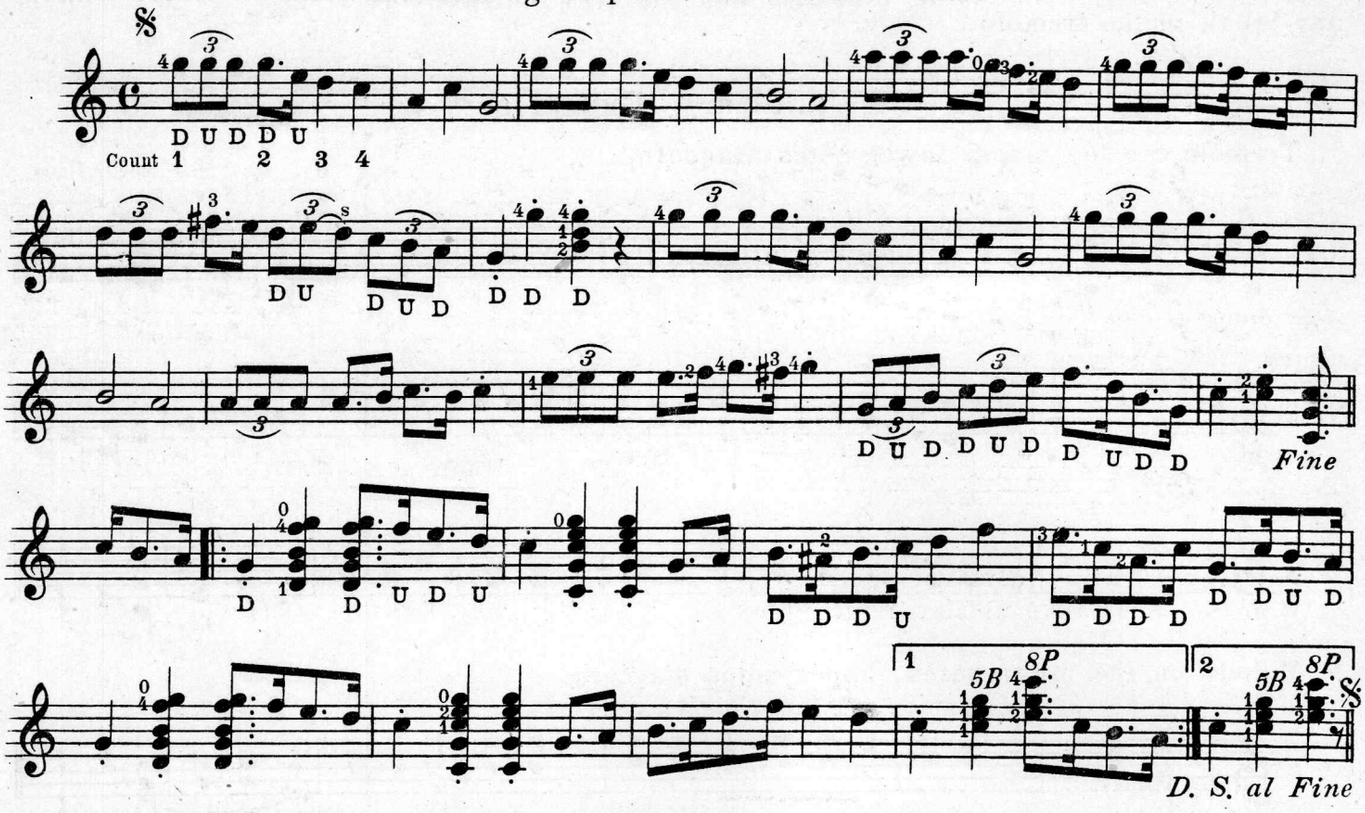
Bass Solo on 4th string

### Chord Study in Barres




In the 21st measure of this study is shown one advantage of the 5th string. Practice until you can get the same amount of volume from each note in a chord. The pick should be held very lightly to produce an organ effect in chords.

The 1st finger determines the position, if the first finger is playing a note on the 5th fret, any string, you are playing in the 5th position no matter where the other fingers are.

# Reuben Schottische

Introducing Triplets and Staccato Notes

*D. S. al Fine* means go back to where you first saw this sign (𝄋) and play to the word *Fine.*

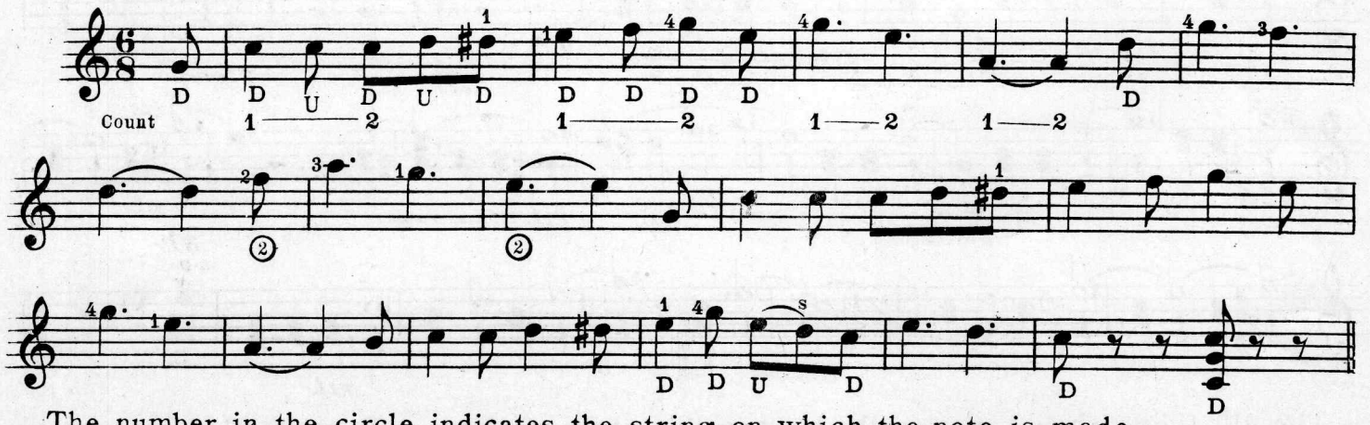
A Triplet is three notes with the figure *3* over or under them and are played in the time of two notes of the same value. Three eighths in the time of two eighths, etc.

When there is a dot over or under a note it is played with a down stroke, this is called staccato which means detached.

Tremolo the quarter nôtes in the above schottische that are not marked staccato.

When the figures 1 and 2 are written over a double bar they indicate two endings, from the first ending the strain must be repeated, the second ending taken the second time and the first ending omitted.

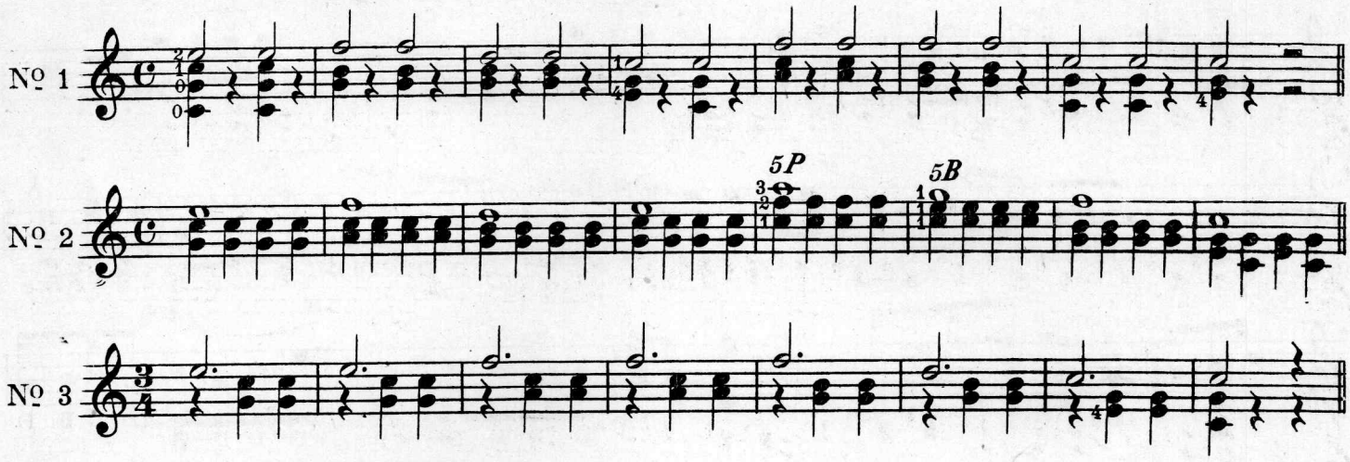
There are two counts to a measure in $^6/_8$ march time. Count one to every 3 eighths or their equivalent. Tremolo dotted quarter and longer notes.

# March

The number in the circle indicates the string on which the note is made.

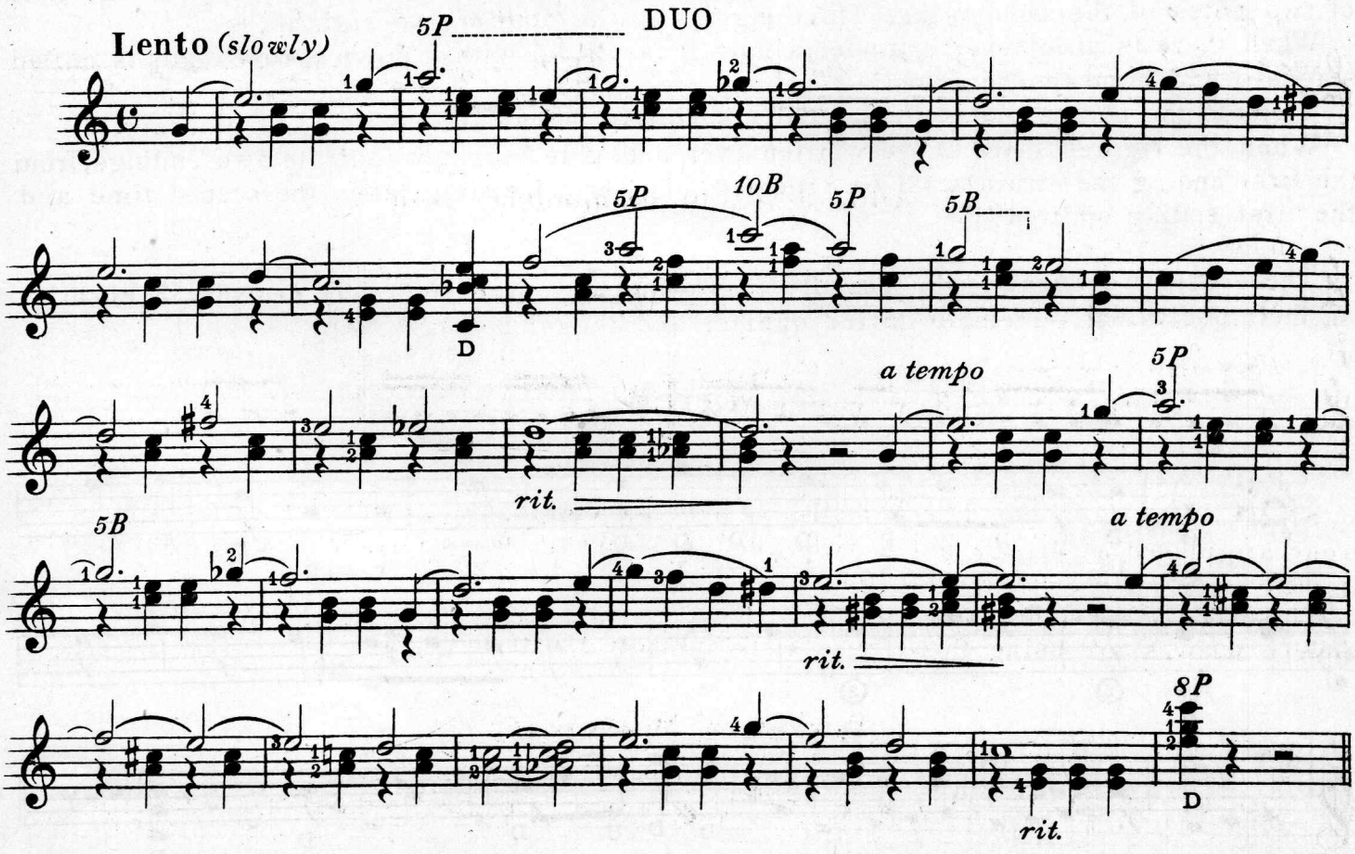
## The Unaccompanied or Duo Style

The accompaniment is always played with the down stroke and must be played without any break in the tremolo.

### Preparatory Exercises

Tremolo the top notes, lower notes staccato.

Melody on the lower notes, upper notes staccato.

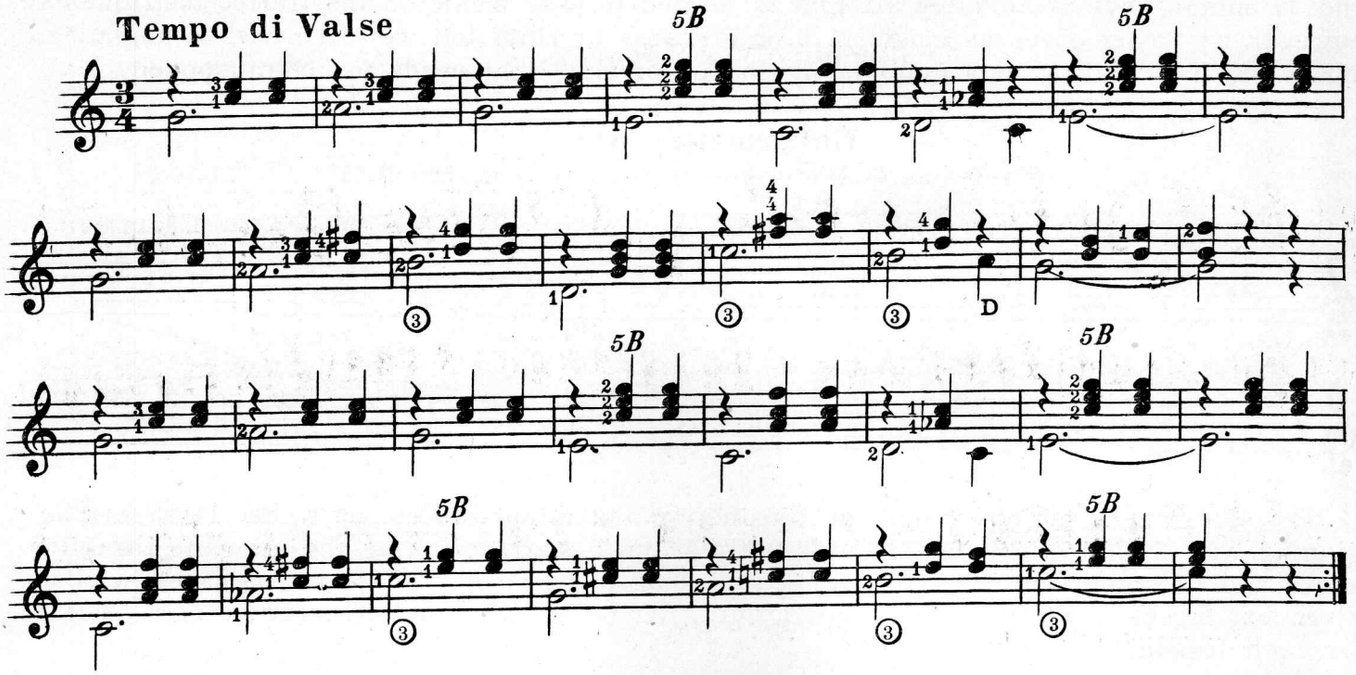
### Reverie




The 4th finger should rest on the head in this style of playing. Tremolo all slurred notes.

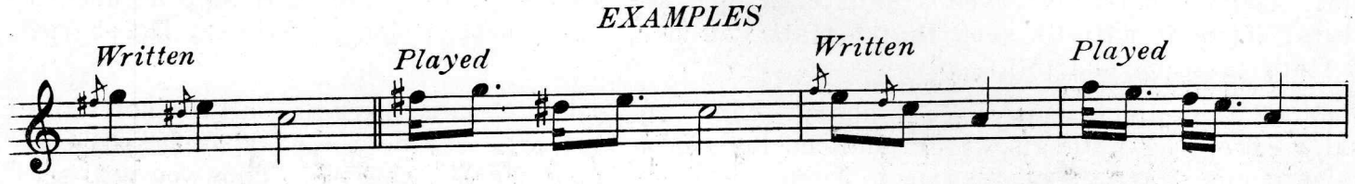
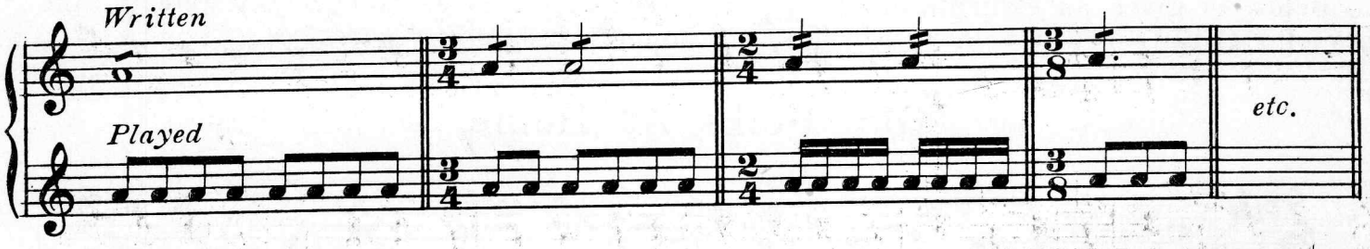
# Lonesome Waltz

With the melody on the lower notes

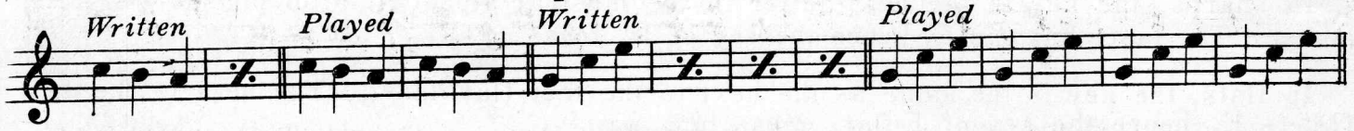



## Grace Notes

The Grace note is a small note or notes added to the principal note, the time given to the Grace note or notes is taken from the principal note.

*EXAMPLES*

## Some Abbreviations frequently used

Since a note with one line added to it is an eighth note, all notes with a line across are played as eighth notes, two lines sixteenth notes etc., making as many eighths or sixteenths as is contained in the note.

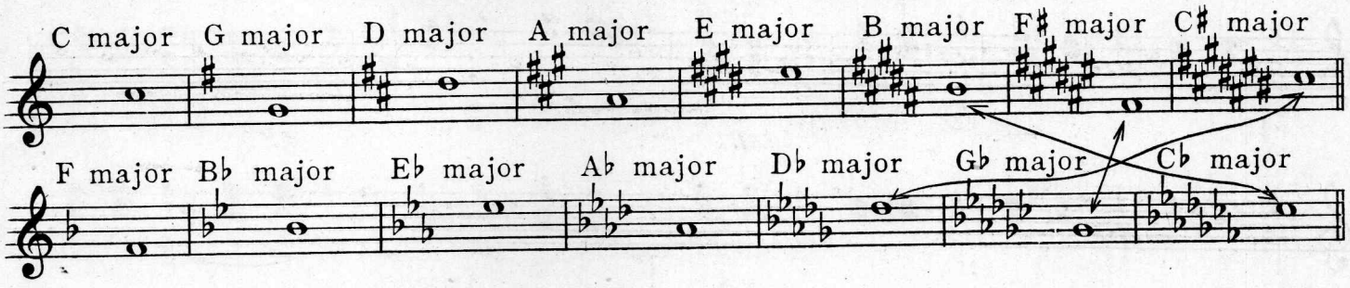
This sign is sometimes used as a tremolo sign, but it does not mean a tremolo. The modern writers are using three lines to indicate the tremolo.

## Repeating Measures

## Enharmonic Keys, Transposing at Sight and how to determine the Key

There are 30 different keys (including the minor keys) to play in music.

There are 6 keys which are enharmonic (written different but sound the same) 12 major and 12 minor keys is actually all that is needed to play music on the fretted instruments, however no writer gives us music in 6 or 7 sharps or flats but we often wish to play piano music which is written in a good many sharps or flats that needs to be transposed.

### Enharmonic Keys

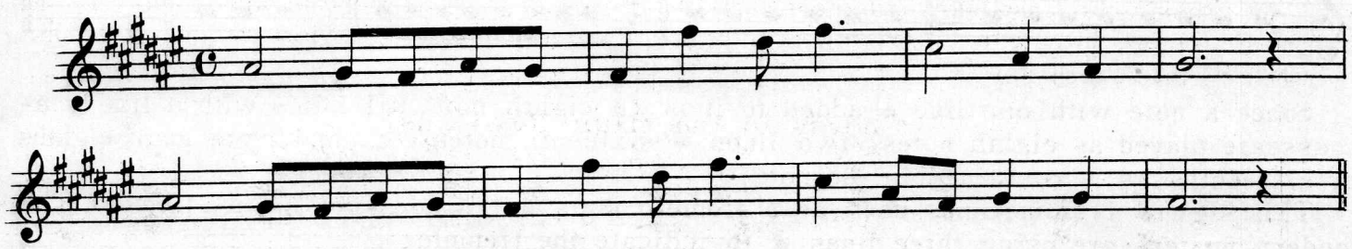
(Those marked with the arrow are enharmonic.)

The student should now write out the major and minor scales, up to the last frets, beginning with 2 sharps and ending with 5 flats and 5 sharps, taking the key note from the above and following the rules regarding scales on pages 4 and 7. No more scales will be given but pieces in different keys will follow. Write a major and its relative minor scale for each lesson.

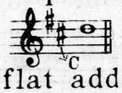
### Transposing at Sight

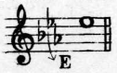
*Rule Nº 1:* A piece written in 7 flats can be played in C natural reading all the notes the same excepting naturals, which must be raised a sharp, a double flat must be lowered one flat, a sharp must be raised a double sharp. The idea is to keep one half step higher in flats. Thus it will be seen that 6 flats can be played in G (1 sharp), 5 flats in D (2 sharps) 4 flats in A (3 sharps).

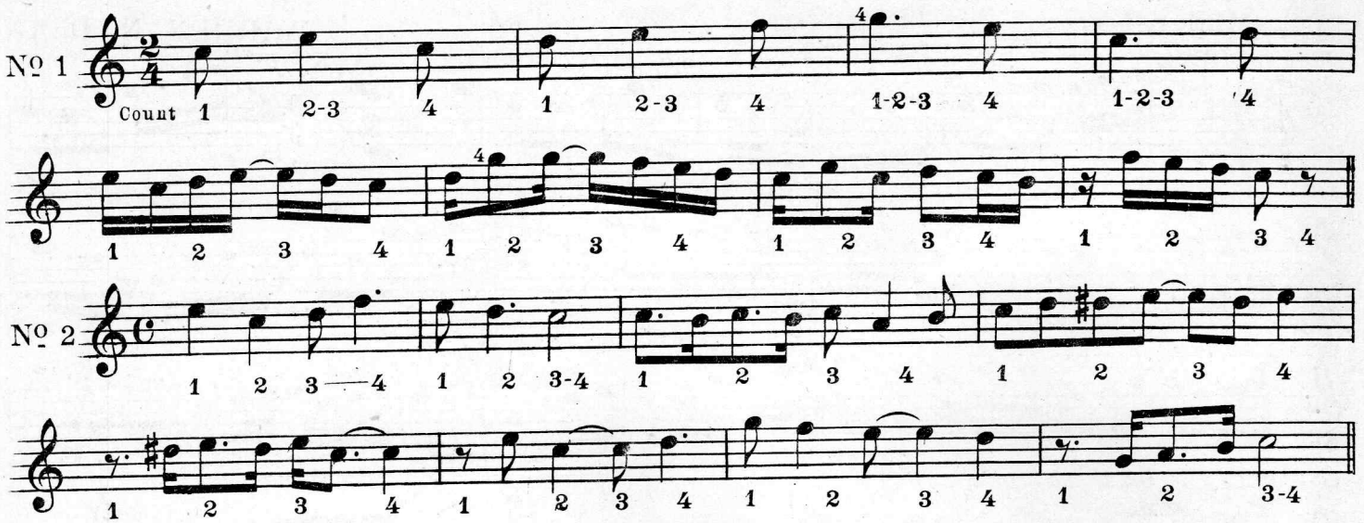
*Rule Nº 2:* A piece written in 7 sharps can be played in C natural reading all the notes the same excepting naturals, which must be lowered a flat, where a double sharp occurs you must raise it one sharp. The idea is to keep one half step lower in sharps. Thus you will see 6 sharps can be played in F (1 flat), 5 sharps in B♭ (2 flats), 4 sharps in E♭ (3 flats), etc.

Below is given an example of transposing, read the notes as though they were in the key of F (1 flat) Try it both ways. Tremolo quarter and longer notes.

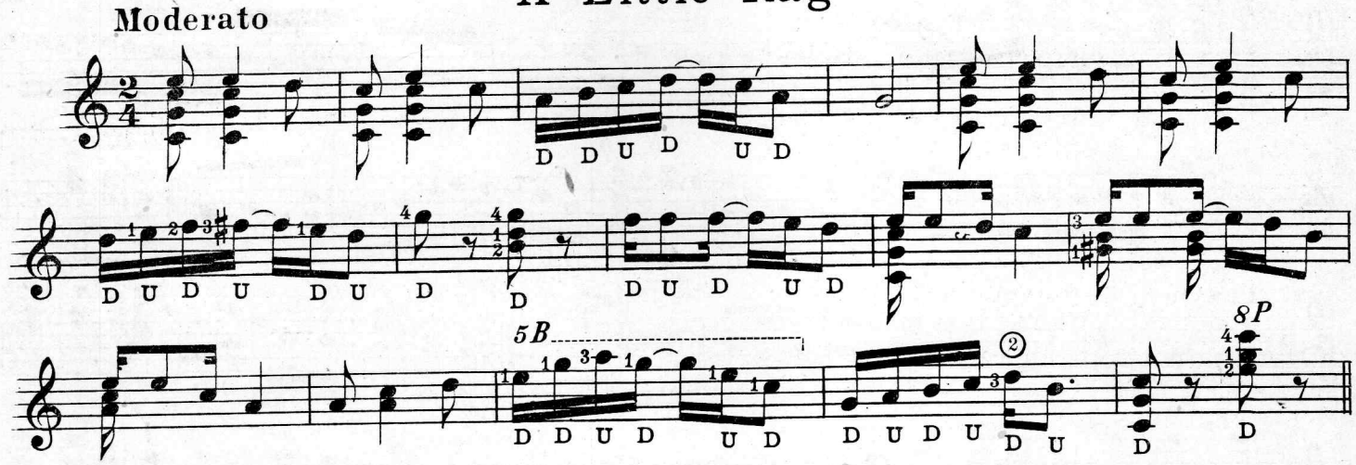
### Old Folks At Home

### How to determine the Key

In sharps, the key is the next letter in the musical alphabet following the last sharp added. The last sharp is C, hence the key of D, *thus:*


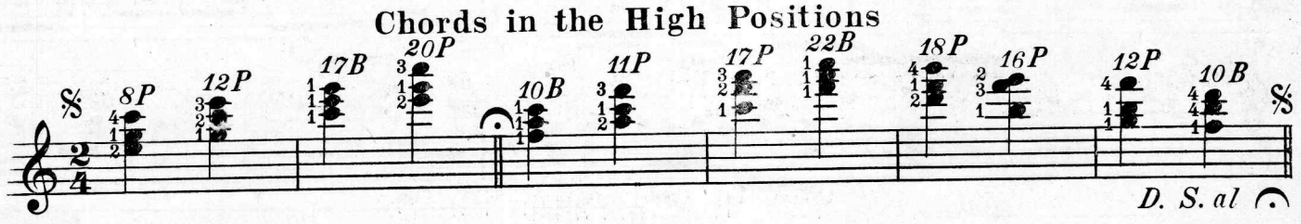
In flats, the key is the same as the next to the last flat added. The next to the last flat is E, hence the key of E flat, *thus:*

## Syncopation or Rag Time

There are a good many styles of syncopation, some of which follow.

Syncopation means an accent on an unaccented pulse of a measure.
The student should tap out the time before playing in the above exercises.

In the following exercise the top note of chords which are quarter notes should be tremoloed. Do not tremolo the full chord, strike the chords with a down stroke retaining the tremolo on the top note.

## A Little Rag

Practice this page thoroughly, until you can play the time exactly as written.
In crossing strings (toward the first string) the pick should glide across to the next string. Do not draw back the pick to make a separate stroke. This is not only easier but facilitates the speed.

### Chords in the High Positions




*D. S. al* means from this sign 𝄋 to the pause 𝄐

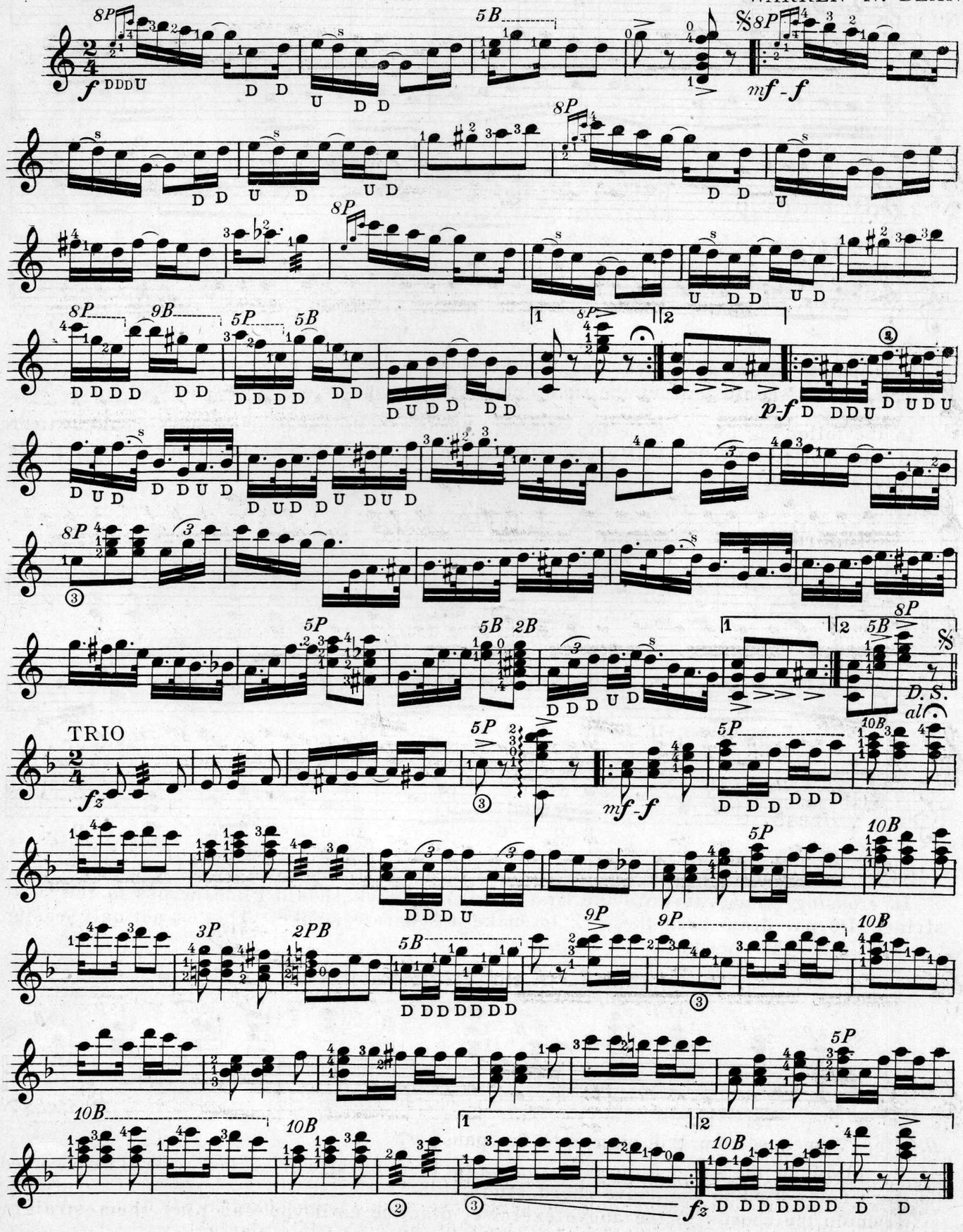
By following the suggestion given on page 13 (writing out scales) you will have learned the high notes used in the above chord study.

Tremolo the chords in the above exercise, practice until you can play them straight through without stumbling.

# That Nightmare Rag

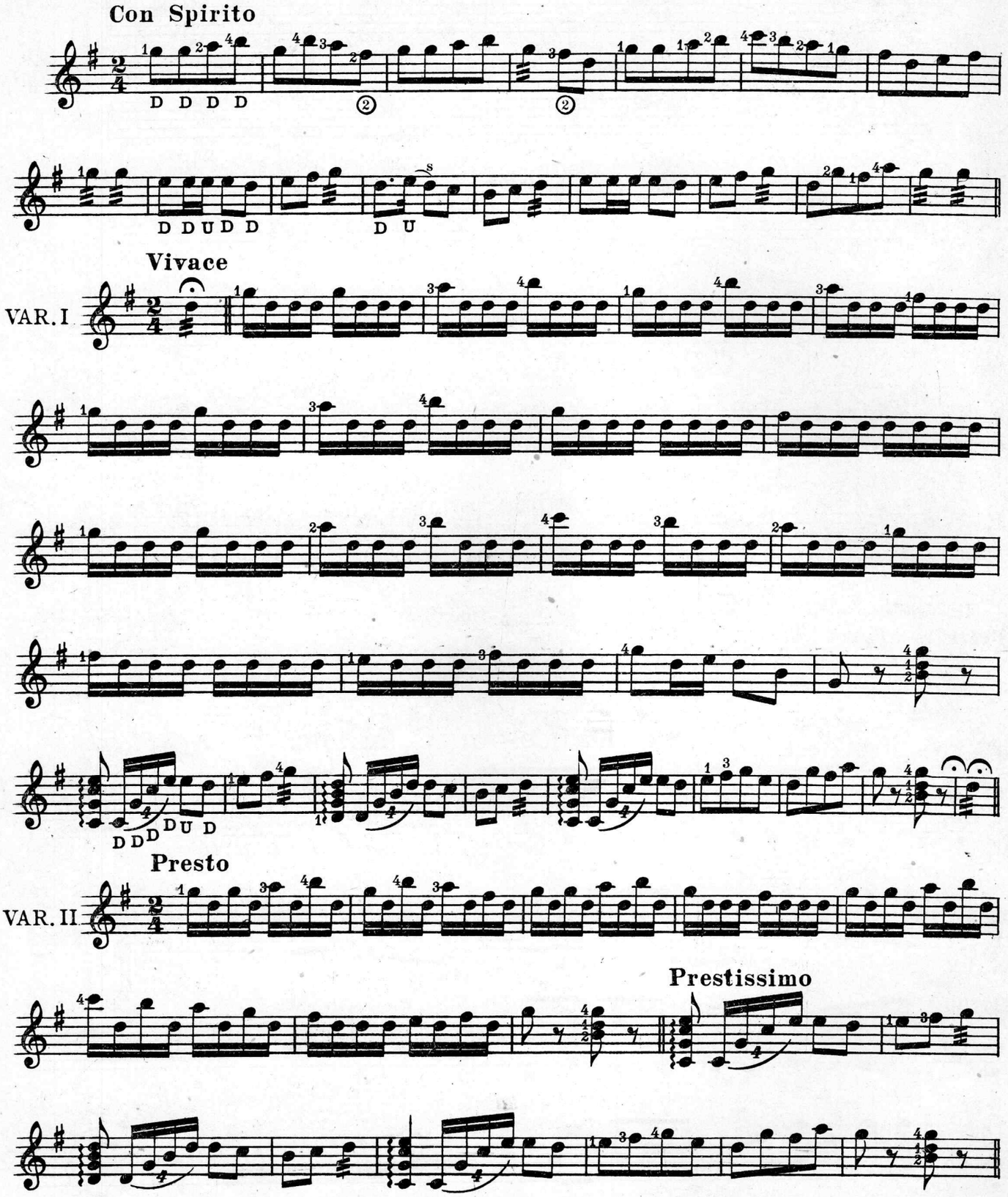
Introducing Grace Notes and different forms of Syncopation

**Moderato**

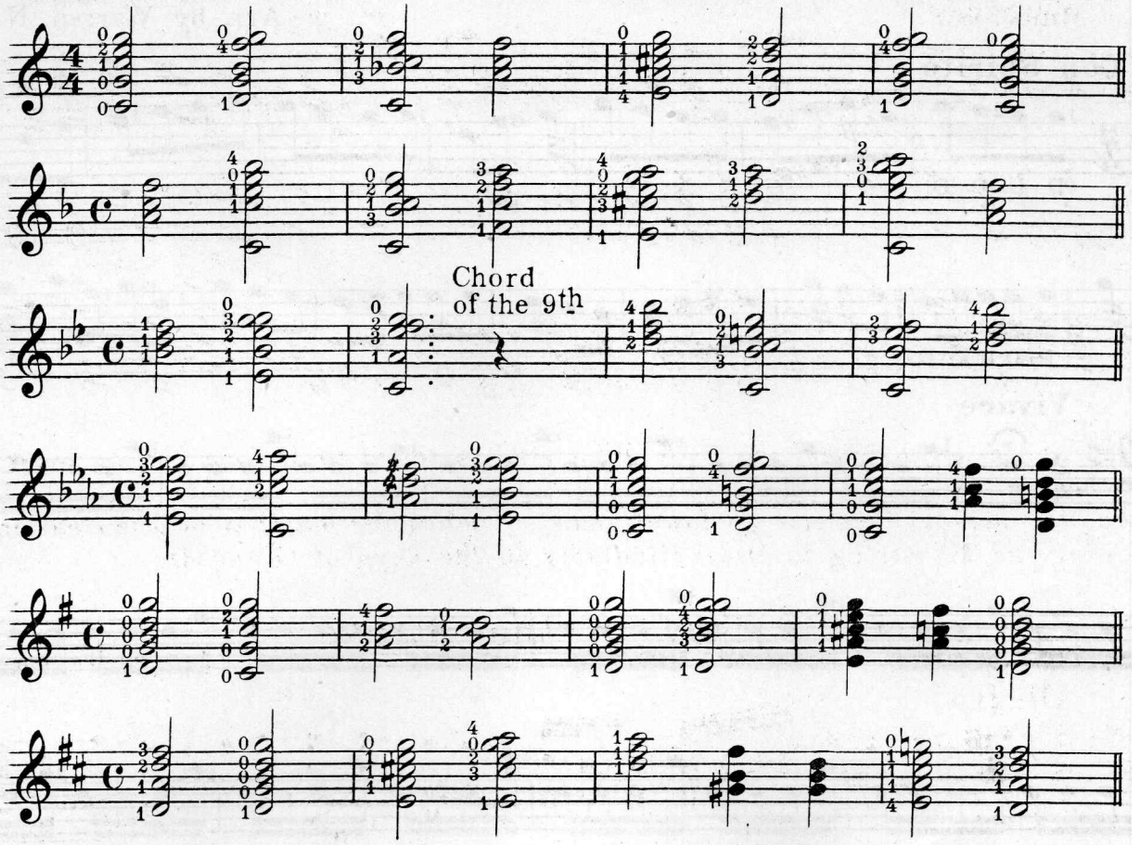
WARREN N. DEAN

Play the above moderately slow.

# Yankee Doodle

With Variations

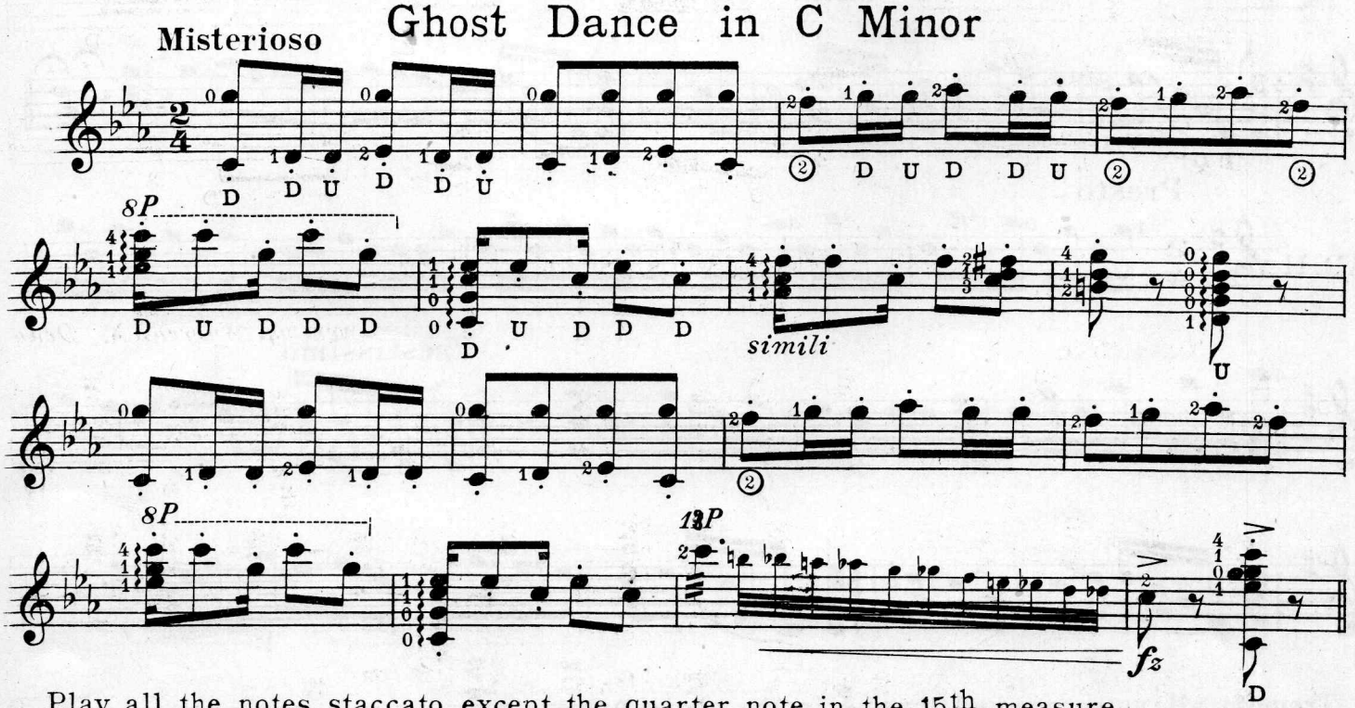
Arr. by Warren N. Dean

Tremolo all notes marked thus in the above piece.

The fingers of the left hand should be kept close to the fingerboard at all times and never allow the third or fourth fingers to slip back of the neck while playing.

## Chords in which the 5th string plays an important part

In playing chords in which the 5th string is used, it must be remembed that the 4th string is always used with it.

There are a good many chords in which the 5th string can be used but the foregoing are the most important.

## Ghost Dance in C Minor




Play all the notes staccato except the quarter note in the 15th measure.

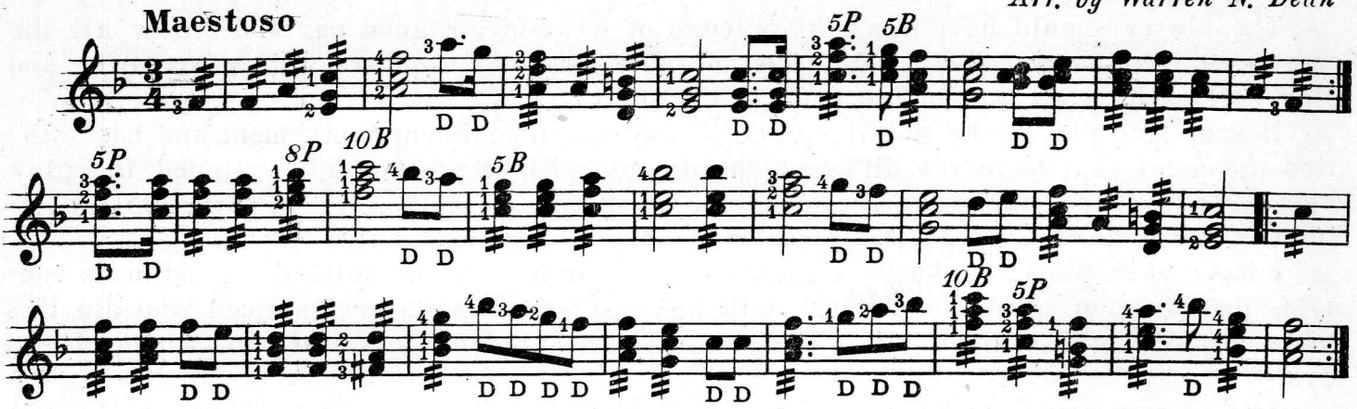
The Cadenza in the 15th measure is played by sliding the 2d finger from the 13th fret 2d string to the first fret, picking very rapidly while doing so.

# The Star Spangled Banner

FRANCIS SCOTT KEY 1814

*Arr. by Warren N. Dean*

Tune Bass to D

**Maestoso**

In the above arrangement the C or 4th string is tuned to D (one octave lower than the first string).

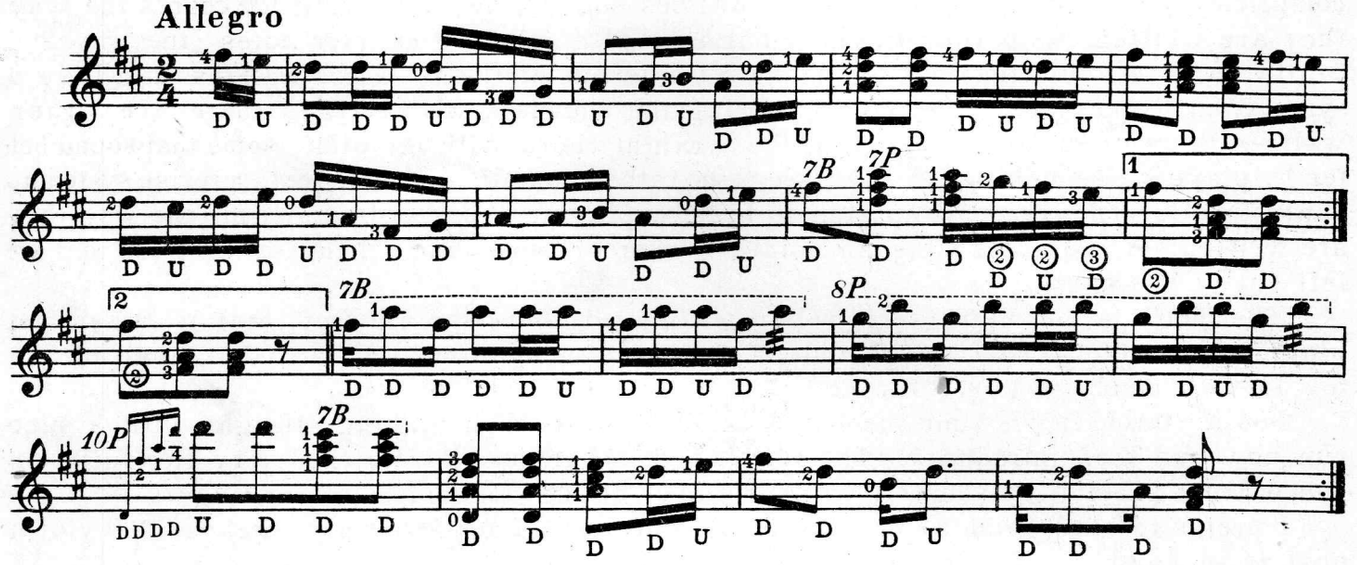
When the melody does not go lower than D (below the staff) it is often easier to play by elevating the 4th string to D, particularly in the keys of G and D.

# Turkey in the Straw

*Arr. by Warren N. Dean*

Tune Bass to D

**Allegro**

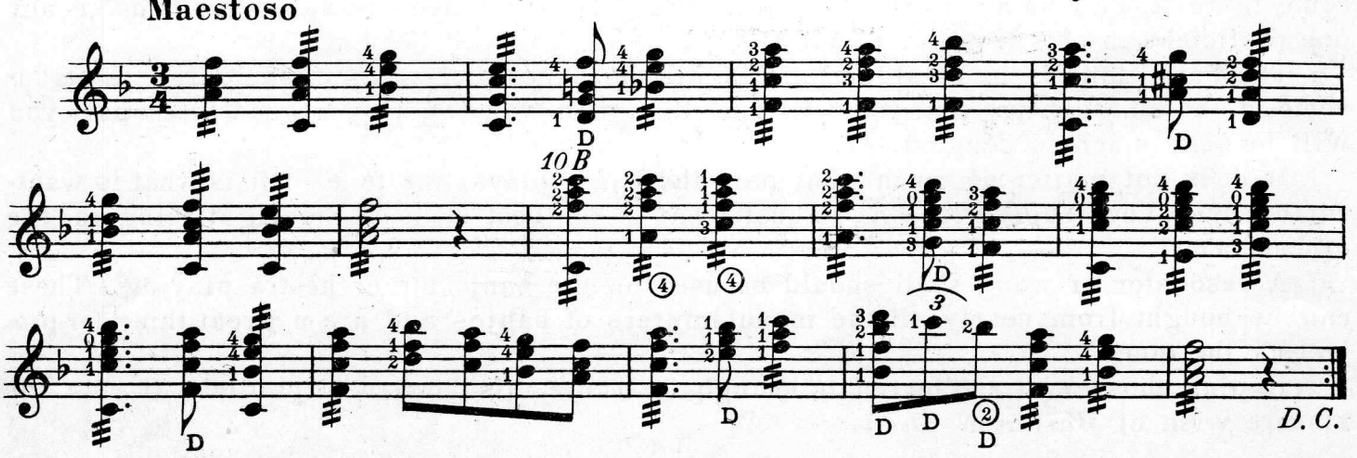


# My Country 'Tis of Thee

(NATIONAL HYMN)

*Arr. by Warren N. Dean*

**Maestoso**



## Playing Banjo Parts from 2nd Violin or Piano Parts

The player should have some knowledge of harmony, a good ear and know all the chords in the different keys. You must be able to read an octave higher or lower and play notes which *are not* on the music, AT SIGHT.

If you have played the guitar, piano or any accompaniment instrument and have studied the notes that form the different chords you will be pretty well equipped to play from 2d violin or piano parts if you have a good ear. A good ear means the ability to know a chord or the chords to a piece by hearing the melody only.

I have seen players fake in a regular dance orchestra but noticed a good many sour notes that did not harmonize at all with the rest and one player I noticed who did this got along very well with it. How the dancers can stand for this stuff has always been a mystery to me.

The proper way is to have a system to go by and you will not be laughed at by some one who knows the banjo.

Most orchestrations are written in C, G, D, A, F, B flat, and E flat, so these keys should be taken up first, one at a time.

A one step affords an opportunity to rag a banjo part. Fox-Trots can be ragged too but are more effective if triplets are used introducing the rag at different strains. By paying attention to the drummer you can get a good many accents from him as the drum plays quite a lot of triplets in this style of a dance. Waltzes and Three Steps are somewhat complicated for a banjo player. Some waltzes sound fine by picking the chords the way they are written, with your fingers, but instead of playing quarter notes (the way 2nd violin parts are written mostly) make eighths out of them. Other waltzes that have a syncopated melody sound better by ragging the chords a little. Then there are other waltzes that sound best by picking the straight chord with the pick, some that sound better by playing the melody. So you see it is rather complicated to give a precise system to apply to all. The Three-Step sounds best by playing the chords and time the way they are written, of course reading an octave higher or lower and filling the notes in that are left out of the part.

The banjo is not heard very well when played above the 5th fret, that is when not playing the melody so I suggest to keep your accompaniment within the range of the 5th fret as much as possible.

For a march in $^6/_8$ time the banjo is at its best when playing straight with a nice run now and then introduced. The rests on the beat must be watched very carefully or you will be playing by yourself while the rest of the musicians are resting.

I prefer to read from 2nd violin parts and use piano parts only when no 2nd violin part is at hand.

I can give only a brief idea on this subject as space will not permit to go into every detail and it would take a book of 100 pages alone to do it justice, however I shall be glad to personally instruct any one (no beginners) in this style of playing who will come to York, Pa., at a very reasonable figure. Ten or fifteen lessons should make any one proficient in this style of playing.

The banjo tone is in great demand in all the dance orchestras of the large as well as some of the small cities and you will find that when you can play a good banjo part you will be very much in demand.

It does not matter so much what part the banjo plays, the tone of it is what is wanted, but the above suggestions as to just what is the best style is the right thing in the orchestra.

A resonator or wood shell should be used on the banjo for orchestra playing. These can be bought from nearly all the manufacturers of banjos and are a great thing for projecting the tone.

Hoping those who are fortunate enough to secure this book will profit by it, is the sincere wish of *Warren N. Dean*.